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University of Madras

GOETHE—HIS LIFE AND WORK

Goethe Centenary Memorial Lecture

BY

The Rev. P. E. BURCKHARDT, Ph.D.

Delivered on 22nd March, 1932, at the Senate House

WITH

Diwan Bahadur K. RAMUNNI MENON, M.A. (Cantab.)

Vice-Chancellor, in the Chair



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GOETHE—HIS LIFE AND WORK.

GOETHE CENTENARY MEMORIAL LECTURE¹

'On August 28th 1749 at noon, as the clock was striking 12, I was born in Frankfort-on-the-Main. The constellation was propitious: the sun had reached the zenith, and was in the sign of the Virgin; Jupiter and Venus were looking on sympathetically; Saturn and Mars were indifferent.' In these words Goethe tells us the story of his birth and, by anticipation, of his life, using in his own way astrological formulæ. The sun had reached the zenith—Goethe is the most brilliant representative of the Age of Enlightenment, and through him its light is being handed down to generations who no longer hold its tenets nor are thrilled by its hopes. Wars and disasters, represented by Mars and Saturn, there were during his life-time, but they did not affect him much, his career was not broken, his thought was in but a small degree influenced by them. Human greatness (Jupiter) and human love (Venus) are most conspicuous.

Goethe, indeed, is the advocate of a life lived for its own intrinsic worth; to heal its ills the resources of the human mind and soul are considered sufficient. Such a message is addressed to all men; it transcends the bounds of nationality, it is unmindful of the lapse of time. Indeed, from the first, Goethe was read and admired in foreign countries, and the conqueror of Germany, Napoleon, visited Goethe to show him his appreciation of his works. Thus it is meet that we in India should also remember him and gather here on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his death.

Goethe's native town Frankfort is one of the most attractive cities in Germany. Prosperous, gay, easily accessible, it was, moreover, in former days the place where emperors were crowned, and as a boy Goethe saw the pomp displayed on such an occasion.

His parents were well-to-do, his mother being a Burgo-master's daughter, and the home was not only cultured in the

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ordinary sense, but his father and mother were actively interested in the progress of literature, and new books of note were eagerly read and discussed. The chief educative factor, however, was the mother's influence. 'From her I have my cheerfulness,' the poet says, and what this cheerfulness implied the mother herself once explained: 'I have received this grace from God that nobody ever went away from me dissatisfied. I have a great love for all human beings; I do not preach morals to them, I always try to see the bright side of a man's character.' Here we see the human touch, the kindness, the sweetness of a woman, cheering, uplifting many. Goethe's mother calls this attitude of hers a gift bestowed upon her by God's grace. Goethe accepts the gift (which he inherited), but he too easily forgets the Giver. Personal religion, to him, is no more to be one of the essentials of life.

Up to his 17th year Goethe lived in Frankfort, with his parents. Every care was taken to develop his intellect; private tuition was provided. Thus, perhaps, a certain egotism, a certain feeling of self-importance was engendered, which he never got rid of altogether. His father's house was frequented by many of the best men in the town, and listening to their conversation the clever boy's mind was enriched.

He once got into hot water through a boyish love for a girl of lower social rank, and only the influence of friends of the family saved him from public disgrace. As a lad of seventeen he went to Liepsic to study law. But Law was never to captivate his mind fully. He heard lectures on many other subjects as well, especially on literature. He also plunged into the gaieties of German students' life. Auerbach's wine-vault was frequented by him, and he was only too well acquainted with its revelries. He returned to Frankfort with impaired health. After more than a year's rest he went to Strassburg in Alsace to finish his studies. In due course he passed his examinations. His genius as a poet had already begun to manifest itself. For a short time he was a nationalist: he went so far as to declare that Gothic architecture was Teutonic, which is not true. He also wrote a drama in praise of a 13th century knight-errant Goetz von Berlichingen, which aroused wild enthusiasm. But his mind soon turned back to themes of general human interest. I refer to *Werther's Leiden*—'The Sufferings of Werther,'—a small book (of 100 pages) which

made his name known all over Europe. The story of Werther is Goethe's own story, all but the tragic end. 'Werther's Leiden' is rightly famous. It breathes a freshness of sentiment, a directness, which is unsurpassed in any other work of Goethe's, and Werther is in a singular contrast to that other great figure of his art, Faust the philosopher, the springs of whose heart have dried up and who is bartering away his soul to get something to fill its emptiness.

Werther is a young man who by nature seems destined to happiness; he has the gift of being able to enjoy things beautiful and lovely around him. He plays with children and is worshipped by them, he wins the confidence of simple people in the villages, brushing aside conventionalities and artificial barriers. Nature to him is full of song and harmony. And then he meets Charlotte—Charlotte, the embodiment of all that is pure and lovely, but she cannot permit herself to fall in love with him, as she is engaged to be married to another man.

From the first Werther feels that the situation is hopeless; but for some time he deludes himself into the belief that he can follow his inclination, see Charlotte and be her friend, without intruding into the rights of others and destroying harmony and good feeling. For is not Charlotte so wonderfully natural in her behaviour towards him? She never betrays the trust reposed in her by Albert, her absent fiancé, but she fully accepts Werther as a friend and spends happy hours with him. More than that: when her fiancé comes he makes friends with Werther, feeling attracted to him as Charlotte had been, and it seems that 'Reine Menschlichkeit' i.e., man allowed to follow his natural instincts, can defy the conventions of society and can find its way unaided by the dictates of Providence. But what happens? Werther is held spellbound by the loftiness of Charlotte's feelings; 'She is sacred to me' he exclaims, 'in her presence desire is silenced. When I hear her sing a certain song, all anguish, all confusion vanishes, and I breathe freely once again.'

She is sacred to me, he says. But this awe, this reluctance to intrude slowly wears off. Charlotte is true to herself, and she expects Werther to respect the divine laws which she herself obeys, but Werther has only his human feelings to be

guided by, his claim to happiness, and how can the latter ever be satisfied? He leaves them for a time, unable to stand the daily torment of Albert's presence; but soon he returns, unable to keep away from Charlotte altogether. He finds them husband and wife. The romance is at an end. Werther ought to reconcile himself to facts, but he cannot, nor can Charlotte yield to his entreaties; there is no way out; life has ceased to be of any value to him, so he chooses death.

This is Goethe's first great message of the power, the uplifting power, the restraining power of pure womanhood. To come back to Goethe's life-story, his writing 'Werther' relieved his mind, and he was only too ready to admire and flirt with girls elsewhere. He did not get married until late in life; there seems to have been with him a sort of inability to surrender himself either to a great cause or to another human being. Conscious of the riches of his own mind and heart, he feared to lose any part of himself, and thus failed to possess that life to which there is access only by self-surrender. One maiden in Alsace he left having broken her heart: she had given her all to him; he just played with her for a time and then left.

About that time he received a call to settle in Weimar, at the court of Augustus, Duke of Saxony-Weimar. Nominally it was to be an appointment to one of the higher posts in the Secretariat of this small state, but the Duke's real purpose was to add to the lustre of his house and to give a great poet leisure to fulfil a poet's task. In Weimar Goethe found another poet, F. Schiller, whose fame is second to Goethe's only. Weimar thus became the Athens, the Rome of Germany. It was there that Goethe, in advanced years, married a girl of the artisan class, Christine Vulpius, to whom he had one day taken a fancy. This marriage was, however, merely a conventional affair, and bears no connection with Goethe's achievements as a poet. Long before he came to know Christine he had found, in Weimar, women from whom he drew inspiration; chief among them was Frau von Stein, the wife of an official. She was older than he, and her maturer judgment often kept him from making a *faux pas*, and damped his ardour. It was she, more than any one else, who fashioned his ideas on the greatness of womanhood, and she is immortalized in several of the heroines of his great

plays. In Weimar Goethe wrote his greatest works. We will proceed to consider them.

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, was to have been offered as a sacrifice to the gods, to secure favourable winds for the ships which carried the Greek army to Troy. But Diana, the virgin goddess wraps her in a cloud and translates her to Tauris in a semi-barbarian northern country (on the shores of the Black Sea) and there makes her the priestess of her shrine. As priestess, a virgin priestess, she changes the cruel customs of the barbarians, she puts a stop to human sacrifice, saving the lives of the strangers whose ships are wrecked on that dangerous coast. Deprived of everything a woman would desire for herself, she accomplishes what only a woman could accomplish, and savage men yield to her sway. The fact that she is an exile makes it perhaps easier for her to fulfil this task:

'.....nor ever here
Does my unquiet spirit feel at home,
And day by day upon the shore I stand,
The land of Hellas seeking with my soul.'

Her soul is not in danger of being carried away by commonplace ambitions and her thoughts wander back to her home and the sweet fellowship of brothers and sisters. She is untouched, untainted by the grosser passions that waken when childhood ends. But though Iphigenia's 'soul remains locked in the deep recesses of her breast,' her attractiveness has not escaped the notice of King Thoas. He had first loved her as a father when from nowhere she had come to the sacred grove, but now he looks on her as his consort-to-be, and in the first act of the play he comes to offer to Iphigenia his heart and his throne. True, the king's speech is not the appeal of a passionate lover. He describes his lonely life and his somewhat selfish desire for happiness; as a king wont to rule and to decide, he expects Iphigenia to fall in with his proposals. But she recoils. She is not meant to be a king's bride. She longs for her home. When day after day

she hopes for an opportunity to return to Hellas, how could she accept a tie that would make her exile a permanent one? And then there is another thing which makes her shrink from marriage: her origin—'Attend! I issue from the Titans' race,' she exclaims, from the race that rebelled against heaven and ventured to attack the gods. All through her family history there is seen rebellion against the divine rule: it is one long gruesome story of hatred, war, and murder. But the king persists. He knows Iphigenia. She has broken 'the band of brass which Jupiter forged round their brow;' she is not the embodiment of the destructive powers of a blind destiny, she is a dispenser of blessings, she is free to do good. He persists in his endeavours to win her, but to no purpose. Finally getting angry, he leaves her, and the old savage spirit taking hold of the barbarian's mind once more he vows that he will revert to the bloody practices of former days. 'A man of noble mind may oft be led by woman's gentle word,' but what if the woman refuses herself to the man? Is not her influence gone, and will not Iphigenia perish as a victim of desires too lofty, too unworldly? And the king's opportunity has come: two foreigners have been found on the shore. 'I shall send them to Diana's grove,' he says, 'and let the goddess once again receive the offering which she has missed all these years.'

These foreigners are Pylades and Orestes. The latter is Iphigenia's brother; he has killed his mother to avenge her crime; she, an adulteress, had murdered her husband, the father of Orestes (and Iphigenia). But terrible as was his mother's guilt, his is as great, and he is pursued by the Furies and expects soon to meet with his fate and to descend to Hades. His friend Pylades is more hopeful: he has heard that the guardian of the shrine is a woman:

'That it is a woman is ground for hope;
On her we may depend
In good or evil with more certainty.'

Here Goethe speaks from his own experience. His life was most blest when he was under the influence of a noble woman, and Frau von Stein in Weimar was to him, in the years in which he was working at this drama, an Iphigenia, a priestess of lofty thought.

The situation threatens to become too much even for Iphigenia : Orestes is driven mad by remorse and regret. But lo ! a sister's love is not repelled by Orestes' misery and guilt. She does not turn from him, and her tender embrace is for him a blessing from the realm of light ; the powers of darkness have lost their hold on him : so long as he is near the sacred shrine the threatening voices of the Furies are no more heard :

'The dread Eumenides at length retire,
The brazen gates of Tartarus I hear
Behind them closing with a thunderous clang.'

But if Orestes is being freed, taken out of the clutches of the powers of darkness, Thoas the king is not, and with ever-growing impatience he claims the sacrifice, the death of the priestess's brother ! Pylades has a plan to save them from destruction—Iphigenia is to tell the king that the idol must be bathed in the sea before the sacrifice takes place, nobody being allowed to watch the ceremony. Their ship will be waiting near the shore to receive Iphigenia. To carry out this plan would serve two purposes—first, to make good their escape, and second, to fulfil the command Orestes had received from the god Apollo before starting on his voyage, viz. to bring back to Hellas the *Sister*, which he interprets as referring to Apollo's sister, Diana, or rather, to Diana's image. Iphigenia at first acquiesces. But suddenly she recoils :

'Detested falsehood : it does not relieve
The breast like words of truth ;
It comforts not,
But is a torment in the forger's heart
And like an arrow which a god directs
Flies back and wounds the archer.'

She decides to tell the king everything and to appeal to his mercy, to his chivalry. To carry off the idol and to deceive the king would mean adding another link to the chain which binds her race to the furies of hell. Will not the gods of heaven come and help ? Meanwhile the king has heard a rumour of the intended flight and arrives on the scene, angry, to claim his due before it is too late. But Iphigenia refuses to be browbeaten ;

'But nor then nor now
Have I been taught compliance with the voice
And savage mandates of a man.'

She boldly speaks to the mighty one who has power over her life and who is coming at the head of an army. She too possesses weapons, a woman's weapons!

'Prayer, lovely prayer, fair branch in woman's hands,
More potent far than instruments of war
Thou dost thrust back.....'

And another weapon is her sincerity. She reveals the plot.

'Destroy us if thou dar'st!'

But he dare not; he sees the reasonableness of their longing to go home and to take the sister home too. Can he refuse to them even the idol which they believe will purify their blood-stained house?

The advent of Orestes almost wrecks her conciliatory plans. Seeing the king, the enemy as he thinks, he draws the sword. Again Iphigenia has to pacify. At last Orestes understands: when the god Apollo told him to bring home the sister from the far-off shore, he meant his, Orestes' sister, not the image of Diana, the sister of Apollo. She, the embodiment of Beauty and Truth, she will remove the curse, she will purify the blood-stained hearth.

The king is overcome. He allows them to depart; he sends them off with a word of blessing.

Iphigenia has achieved the salvation of all. She, the pure woman-soul, has broken the curse and has kept them from wrong-doing and guilt.

Another great drama of the early years in Weimar is

TORQUATO TASSO.

Torquato Tasso like Iphigenia extols pure womanhood, that has conquered itself and shines forth in almost unearthly splendour. But between the two dramas there is a world of difference. Iphigenia brings healing to a tortured soul, Tasso, on the other hand, is the victim of his love to Leonora: The drama describes the life of Torquato Tasso, the author of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, at the court of Ferrara in Italy. The Renaissance is at its height. The ancient civilization of Greece and Rome have yielded their riches to the admiring

mind of man. Virgil is more loved than the mediæval saints and his bust adorns the garden of the palace of Belrigardo where the scene of the drama is laid. The ambition of each prince is to have at his court a poet, whose talents and achievements outshine those of the poets at rival courts. Ferrara has Torquato Tasso, and at last the poet hands over to his patron the manuscript of his great poem. The Duke is overjoyed. His patronage has borne abundant fruit, and in princely generosity, he wishes to crown the poet's brow with the token of his admiration, and his sister, princess Leonora, takes from Virgil the garland she had woven herself and approaches Tasso.

Tasso's measure of happiness is overflowing and the favour of Leonora seems to open a brighter prospect still. He is not ashamed to own it, the most noble thoughts which his poems give expression to have been inspired by her, they are true, because in her they are a reality. Yea, through her the divine has been revealed to him. Will thus the touch of pure womanhood lift him up higher and higher?

He thinks so. Leonora cautions him; 'You men love us,' she says; 'What do you love?'

'Beauty is transient which alone ye seem
To hold in honour.....
If among men there were who knew to prize
The heart of woman, who could recognise
What treasures of fidelity and love
Are garnered safely in a woman's breast,
If the possession which should satisfy
Waken'd no restless cravings in your hearts'

And again—certain things can only become our own 'through moderation and wise self-restraint'. These are golden words; but do they carry conviction? Rather, do they give strength to carry these noble principles into practice? Leonora's sympathy is in strong contrast to a rather cold welcome Tasso receives at the hands of Antonio, a brilliant diplomat just back from a successful political mission; his offer of friendship to Antonio meets with a rebuff, and the scene ends with Tasso challenging Antonio with the sword. The coming of the Duke puts a stop to the quarrel. But the poet's behaviour was incorrect and a light punishment is inflicted, and Tasso's

mind is filled with dark suspicions. The latter part of the play centres in the attempt made by Leonora the princess and Leonora Sanvitale to conciliate Antonio and Tasso. Leonora Sanvitale is a friend to the Duke, and a would-be patroness of Tasso. Antonio is made to apologise for his rudeness. Leonora Sanvitale offers to take Tasso to other places to refresh his mind, in reality to enjoy his company and earn praise for her interests towards the poet. Tasso listens gratefully to these offers, a little overcome by the successive happenings of that one day in which he was both honoured and dishonoured as never before. But though the contretemps is overcome his heart is not satisfied. Both Leonora Sanvitale and Leonora the princess have shown him all the kindness and delicacy of feeling a refined woman is capable of, but Tasso wants more, he wants the love of the woman who admires him; he cannot anymore restrain his love to the princess, he claims her as his bride but the princess is frightened and withdraws and the poet recognizes that he has broken the strict rules of court-etiquette and that his position in Ferrara is lost, irretrievably lost. No punishment is meted out to him but what is perhaps worse, pity.

And what is his error? To have loved a woman whose heart was attuned to his own. To have been lifted up high by her admiration and devotion, to have trusted her to follow the dictates of her heart as he was following his own. The drama ends in Tasso pouring out his soul in bitter complaints.

'And thou, too, siren, who so tenderly
Didst lead me on with thy celestial mien
Thee now I know! Wherefore, Oh God, so late?'

He soon recognizes that he is carried away by his feelings :

'My very bones are crushed, yet do I live
Ay, live to feel the agonising pain.....
Despair enfolds me in its ruthless grasp
And in the hell-pang that annihilates
These slanderous words are but the feeble cry'

Where, then, is the gospel of uplifting womanhood!

Goethe, for some time, was unable to proclaim it. His relation to Frau von Stein in Weimar, after some years, became a torture to both. The lady bound by her position and bound

also by her loyalty to her husband, could not give to the passionate man what he demanded. And Goethe craving in turn for a platonic friendship and for a lover's reward brought both happiness and misery into the life of the woman he adored.

Goethe, several times, set out for journeys to Switzerland and to Italy and we have to remember that in days gone by journeys took long and were tedious. But Goethe was a lover of the antique world and of its Renaissance in the 15th century and his wanderings through Milan, Florence, Venice and Rome won his heart and mind to the ideas extolled by Aristotle and Praxitiles, and the second part of *Faust* is to a great extent an attempt to unite Teutonic art with the Grecian.

But again it would be impossible to characterise Goethe as an exponent of certain theories on art, he is much too human for that and his respect, his affection for man, for men in the ordinary walks of life is intense, he first made the life of common men and women the subject of great dramas and so let us now turn to Goethe's greatest work, the first part of *Faust* with its full emotional life.

The *Faust* legend can be traced back to centuries before Goethe and as a boy he read the popular version of the legend i.e., of the scholar who exchanged theology for magic art and in exchange for his soul got from the devil a more than ordinary knowledge of things and every sensual enjoyment.

In Goethe's drama the setting is different. It starts with a dialogue between God and Mephistopheles (name given to the evil one).

'What will you bet (Meph. asks) there's still a chance to gain him.

'If unto me full leave you give,
Gently upon my road to train him!'

The Lord.

'As long as he on earth shall live,
So long I make no prohibition.
While man's desire and aspirations stir,
He cannot choose but err.'

(This is in imitation of the first chapters of the Biblical book of *Job*). The pact of *Faust* with Mephisto must be understood

on the background of this providential care of the Lord for his erring child. So from the very start the deliverance of Faust from the seducer's power is forecast. The scholar and alchemist Faust is seen first in his study. He is through with all that man can teach and is disillusioned and woos himself to magic.

'I've studied now Philosophy
And Jurisprudence, Medicine,.....
And even, alas! Theology,.....
From end to end, with labour keen;
And here, poor fool! with all my lore
I stand, no wiser than before;
I'm Magister,—yea, Doctor—hight
And straight or crosswise, wrong or right,
These ten years long, with many woes,
I've led my scholars by the nose,—
And see, that nothing can be known
That knowledge cuts me to the bone.'

'I'm cleverer, true, than those fops of teachers
Doctors and Magisters, Scribes and Preachers;
Neither scruples nor doubts come now to smite me,
Nor Hell nor Devil can longer affright me.
For this, all pleasure am I foregoing;
I do not pretend to aught worth knowing,
I do not pretend I could be a teacher
To help or convert a fellow-creature.
Then, too, I've neither lands nor gold,
Nor the world's least pomp or honour hold—'

'No dog would endure such a curst existence!
Wherefore, from Magic I seek assistance,
That many a secret perchance I reach
Through spirit-power and spirit speech,
And thus the bitter task forego
Of saying the things I do not know,—
That I may detect the inmost force
Which binds the world, and guides its course;
Its germs, productive powers explore,
And rummage in empty words no more!'

He conjures up the earth-spirit, the spirit of the multiform earthly Universe, or the spirit of History of the movement of

the Human Race (these are the explanations of the commentators) who introduces himself in the beautiful verses :

'In the tides of Life, in Action's storm
A fluctuant wave,
A shuttle free,
Birth and the Grave,
An eternal sea,
A weaving, flowing
Life, all-glowing,
Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares
The garment of Life which the Deity wears !'

Faust believes to be on a par with the spirit, but the spirit retorts :

'Thou'rt like the Spirit which thou comprehendest,
Not me !'

so that Faust is thrown back on to the grosser, material views of life; he regrets his years of toil, his efforts to reach the realm of divine life. His eye is caught by the phial which contains the fluid that will end all earthly misery, his hand has seized it. But when he is about to drink, a mighty chorus is heard from the neighbouring cathedral. It is Easter, and the message of life from death is once more proclaimed to the world.

Faust is overcome. The sweet memories of childhood and a child's faith crowd in upon him. Although he complains 'your messages I hear but faith has not been given', still the conclusion is :

'Sound on, ye hymns of Heaven, so sweet and mild !
My tears gush forth : the Earth takes back her child !'

Hymns of Heaven were required to save Faust from despair. But he is not going to make himself an offering to God, who saved him. His interest is entirely in this world. He craves enjoyments, coarse ones and refined ones. Mephistopheles comes to offer his services promising full satisfaction. The return payment which is to consist in the soul of Faust, need not be made at once. Faust falls in with the offer, assured that the devil never will be able to fulfil his part of the pact

'When on an idler's bed I stretch myself in quiet,
There let, at once, my record end !
Canst thou with lying flattery rule me,
Until, self-pleased, myself I see,

'Canst thou with rich enjoyment fool me
 Let that day be the last for me !
 The bet I offer.....'

'.....And heartily

When thus I hail the Moment flying :

"Ah, still delay—thou art so fair !"

Then bind me in thy bonds undying,

My final ruin then declare !

Then let the death-bell chime the token,

Then art thou from thy service free !

The clock may stop, the hand be broken,

The time be finished unto me !'

Faust is first taken to a wineshop frequented by students, Auerbach's cellar where wine and more wine brings about a very real but very vulgar atmosphere of well-being

.....'We feel

So cannibalic jolly'

but Faust wants to leave. He is too good for such bestiality.

Faust is now taken to the witches' kitchen to be rejuvenated before he goes in for the best Mephisto has to offer. It is a coarse scene and by it Faust's approach to Margaret is vitiated.

The climax of the drama is reached in the figure of Margaret whom Goethe named after his first boyish love to a girl in Frankfort and here Goethe's message of the purifying influence of woman is proclaimed more forcefully, if somewhat more in a paradoxical form than anywhere else. Faust is the passionate, selfish, unscrupulous, lover; Margaret loves because she cannot withhold anything from him who has won her heart, because she cannot but trust him to whom she has entrusted her all. She loses her good name, her brother Valentine is killed in a vain attempt to avenge the dishonour of his sister. He is slain by Faust. At last she breaks down in shame and terror when in Church she hears the chorus heralding the Day of Judgement :

'Judex ergo com sedebit,

Quidquid latet, adparebit,

Nil inultum remanebit.

When the judge will sit for judgement

Every hidden thing will appear

Nothing will remain unavenged'

Margaret.

'I cannot breathe!
The massy pillars
Imprison me!
The vaulted arches
Crush me !.....Air !'

'Evil spirit.

Hide thyself ! Sin and shame
Stay never hidden.
Air ? Light ?
Woe to thee !'

Chorus.

'Quid sum miser tune dicturus,
Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus
What shall I miserable one then say,
Which saint implore
When even the just will hardly be secure?'

'Evil spirit.

They turn their faces,
The glorified, from thee :
The pure, their hands to offer,
Shuddering, refuse thee ;
Woe !' "

Chorus.

'Quid sum miser tune dicturus.....'

Margaret.

'Neighbour ! your cordial !'

Once more we find Faust in the ignoble society of witches where however he can find no relief from the torments of remorse. Margaret meanwhile, is thrown into prison for murdering her child and poisoning her mother with a sleeping-draught and she goes out of her mind.

Faust, with keys provided by Mephisto comes to release her ; when she recognizes the voice of her beloved the devilish obsession of the fear of hell vanishes

' 'Tis I'

Margaret.

' 'Tis I'

' 'Tis he ! 'tis he ! Where now is all my pain ?

The anguish of the dungeon, and the chain?
 'Tis thou ! Thou comest to save me,
 And I am saved !—
 Again the street I see
 Where first I looked on thee ;
 And the garden, brightly blooming,
 Where I and Martha wait thy coming'

but again there is something in Faust that is repulsive to her.

'Thy dear, dear hand ! But, ah, 'tis wet !
 Why, wipe it off ! Methinks that yet
 There's blood thereon.
 Ah, God ! what hast thou done ?
 Nay, sheathe thy sword at last !
 Do not affray me !'

And Margaret, unable to follow him fills her mind with pictures of her doom and death from the executioner's hand. The crisis comes with Mephisto's appearance. Guilty as she is, she is not yet in the devil's possession, she commends herself to God's righteous judgement :

'Thine am I, Father ! rescue me !
 Ye angels, holy cohorts, guard me,
 Camp around, and from evil ward me !
 Henry ! I shudder to think of thee.' '

She is judged, cries Mephistopheles. But a voice from above is heard, 'She is saved'.

So, Margaret emerges in wonderful purity, although not in innocence, from the terrible ordeal, and it is in tune with the spirit of Part I of Faust, that in Part II she appears as a penitent and is pardoned and that Faust is snatched away from the very jaws of hell ; the angels soar into the higher atmosphere carrying the immortal part of Faust :

'The noble spirit now is free
 And saved from evil scheming,
 Who ever aspires unweariedly
 Is not beyond redeeming ;
 And if he feels the grace of love
 That from on High is given
 The blessed Hosts that wait above
 Shall welcome him to heaven.'

This is by universal consent, Goethe's 'Welt-anschauung,' his creed. Faust has overcome because he never ceased to aspire after better things.

Mephisto's gifts never were satisfying to him. Goethe's message is reasserted in the closing lines of Faust :

'All things transitory
But as symbols are sent.
Earth's insufficiency
Here grows to Event.
The indescribable
Here it is done;
The woman's soul leadeth us
Upward and on.'

Having acquainted ourselves so far with Goethe's thought we must ask one more question. What are his views on religion? For each man in the last resort is worth what his religion is worth. This is a much discussed problem and various schools of thought claim him as their own. I have come to the following conclusion; Goethe was a religious man, if the term is taken in a general sense. He once said: 'Lack of faith makes people weak, petty and retrograde.' And again: 'People are productive only as long as they are religious. Margaret once questions Faust about his beliefs and Faust replies :

'Hear me not falsely, sweetest countenance.
Who dare express Him?
And who profess Him,
Saying: I believe in Him!
Who, feeling, seeing,
Deny His being,
Saying: I believe Him not!
The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,
Folds and upholds he not
Thee, me, Himself?
Arches not there the sky above us?
Lies not beneath us, firm, the earth?
And rise not, on us shining,
Friendly, the everlasting stars?
Look I not, eye to eye, on thee
And feel'st not, thronging
To head and heart, the force,

Still weaving its eternal secret
 Invisible, visible, around thy life?
 Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart,
 And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
 Call it, then, what thou wilt,—
 I have no name to give it !
 Feeling is all in all :
 The Name is sound and smoke,
 Obscuring Heaven's clear glow.'

Margaret is not satisfied :

'Some hitch in it there must be
 For thou hast no Christianity.'

How far was Goethe a Christian? He was a Christian to the extent of believing in a Providence, in an Almighty Creator and Ruler. He was a Christian in assigning to Christian faith a power for good which no other thing has: one instance we have noticed: it was the Easter Hymn that turned back to life the despairing thoughts of Faust. Another instance is found in his novel: 'The Apprenticeship of William Meister.' A young girl Mignon after a life of misery, dies a sudden and sad death. How to explain this? But Mignon was not comfortless: at the funeral the priest shows, on her arm, the image of a crucifix. She found strength in the contemplation of the crucified Saviour.

Goethe held genuine Christians in high esteem and sought their company. But having a true insight into the nature of Christian faith he recognized that Christian faith is an exacting thing. And he was not willing to pay the price. Life, unregenerated life, had too many attractions for him, had in store for him too much greatness and glory. He was too sure of himself to stake his all upon a life he had not lived, and a death he had not died. He says, as quoted before that he who aspires unweariedly is not beyond redeeming. This is self-redemption or at least self-appointed redemption. The fact of sin, of the awful sinfulness of sin he did not accept; so he did not need a redeemer. His gospel was the gospel of humanity, and the leader of humanity to higher regions was to be the woman soul, the eternal feminine (to give the literal translation), the uplifting power of noble womanhood.

Goethe's sympathy with all things human made him take interest in a multitude of things, natural history and science being among the favourite subjects he pondered over. He produced e.g. a new theory on the origin of colour. He had no national prejudices. He admired Shakespeare as much as any Englishman; his mind went out to the Eastern peoples and he delighted in the masterpieces of Persian and Indian poetry. He does not seem to have read the Vedas, Mahabharatha and Ramayana, but he must have known that they existed; he was particularly attracted by Kalidas. Of Sakuntala he says:—

'Wilt thou give a name to what charms the mind and satisfies it, to the flower that adorns the early days of the year and to the fruit that blesses its latter days, to heaven and earth in one, say Sakuntala, and thou hast named all this.' Again it is the humaneness of Sakuntala's character that Goethe admires. In an atmosphere vitiated by the curse of a Sanyasi and the etiquette of a court there lives Sakuntala, a true noble woman. He also mentions *Meghaduta* and *Nala* as worthy of high praise; on the other hand he had no sympathy with Indian sculpture. It appears to him grotesque with its monstrous shapes and its lack of moderation. He is also much concerned with the abject condition of the Pariah. And in one of his ballads a Pariah implores Brahman to explain to him the cause of his misery. The God's reply, in the form of a legend, is that none is so pure as to be above falling and none so depraved as to be unfit for moral uplift. Having thus received ground for hope the Pariah is satisfied. Goethe being free from national or racial bias, every nation and every race can enjoy his works and profit by them. But as his final standards are nature and beauty rather than the things that are higher than man, many of us will pause before entrusting ourselves to his leadership. To me, the light of life does not come from him but to Goethe I do owe broadened views, emancipation from everything petty. He is a corrective against any belittling of human values.

Goethe has left many works, and I have not mentioned even all the important ones. I have omitted his smaller poems too especially the lyrical ones in which he excels and the epigrams full of deep wisdom. Goethe lived in Weimar

until his death. He was the recognized prince among poets and was held in universal veneration. As years went on he became more and more solitary. Even his only son died before him, in 1830. Still he does not lose touch with his fellow men. He exchanges letters with Byron, Walter Scott, Carlyle.* He is interested in the idea of a Suez canal.

On the 17th of March 1832 Goethe fell ill with a cold and on the 22nd he died. But his death has not removed him from men. His works are read, his sayings quoted, his message is discussed. In this era of mass production he reminds us that we are nothing unless we have individuality. Among the machines and machine-made things of the present day he extols the mind and the culture of the mind. He was great but easy of approach, and so he is to-day in many of his works and the best homage we can bring him is to go to him and enrich ourselves with the treasures of his genius.

